PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY
ARTHUR SMALL

FEBRUARY 24, 1978
SERIES 4 NO. 2

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA: A CITY REBORN
(INSERTS AVAILABLE IN APE LIBRARY)

TAPE: CUT ONE -- THEME: ESTABLISH, THEN FADE BEHIND FOR NARR:

NARR: IN DECEMBER OF 1864, TOWARD THE END OF HIS DESTRUCTIVE MARCH ACROSS THE SOUTHLAND, UNION GENERAL WILLIAM SHERMAN ARRIVED IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, AND DECIDED TO SPARE IT FROM THE BURNING AND PILLAGING HE HAD INFLICTED ON ATLANTA AND OTHER CITIES AND TOWNS ALONG HIS MARCH. INSTEAD, HE DISPATCHED HIS FAMOUS TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN WHICH READ: "I BEG TO PRESENT YOU, AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT, THE CITY OF SAVANNAH."

NOW, SOME 114 YEARS LATER, SAVANNAH IS RETURNING THE FAVOR TO THE NATION BY PROVIDING A MODEL OF HOW AN OLD AND HISTORIC CITY CAN REVITALIZE ITSELF.

TAPE: BRING UP FULL, THEN FADE AND HOLD UNDER:

ANNCR: THIS IS ANOTHER IN THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES WHICH BRINGS YOU PORTRAITS IN WORDS AND SOUNDS OF AMERICAN CITIES. TODAY ... SAVANNAH, GEORGIA ... A CITY REBORN.

TAPE: REESTABLISH. HOLD BRIEFLY, THEN FADE OUT BEHIND:

ANNCR: YOUR GUIDE ON OUR VISIT TO SAVANNAH, IS ----------.

NARR: SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, THE FIRST PLANNED CITY IN NORTH AMERICA, WAS LAID OUT BY AN ENGLISHMAN, JAMES OGLETHORPE, IN 1733.

OPT

SOME HISTORIANS CLAIM THAT THE DISTINCTIVE PATTERN OF THE CITY, WITH ITS MANY SQUARES AND PARKS, HAS A MARKED RESEMBLANCE TO PEKING, CHINA.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- TOUR GUIDE:

"WELCOME TO HISTORIC SAVANNAH, THE COLONIAL CAPITAL OF GEORGIA, WHERE THE LAST OF THE ORIGINAL THIRTEEN COLONIES BEGAN. THIS TOUR EMPHASISES OUR UNIQUE CITY PLAN, OUR FASCINATING RIVER FRONT AND OUR MAGNIFICIENT AREAS OF RESTORATION..."

NARR: (CROSSFADE WITH TAPE. TAPE CONTINUES FOR AN ADDITIONAL 10 SECONDS)

THE VOICE OF A SAVANNAH TOUR GUIDE. HE WILL TELL THE VISITOR THAT THE CITY HAS A POPULATION OF ABOUT 120,000 ... THAT IT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EASTCOAST SEAPORTS BETWEEN NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS. HE WILL TELL OF THE DEVASTATING FIRES OF 1796 AND 1820 WHICH COMPLETELY WIPED OUT ENTIRE SECTORS OF SAVANNAH, AND HOW, LIKE THE MYTHICAL PHOENIX, THE CITY ROSE FROM ITS ASHES, TO REBUILD AND LIVE ONCE AGAIN. HE WILL POINT WITH PRIDE TO THE FACT THAT SAVANNAH IS RENOVATING ITS DOWNTOWN AREA, IT'S WATERFRONT AREA, ITS PRICELESS ANTEBELLUM HOMES AND HISTORIC LANDMARKS. YET, HE MAY FAIL TO MENTION THE CITY'S SERIOUSLY DETERIORATED "VICTORIAN DISTRICT" ... A 45-BLOCK AREA OF WOOD-FRAME HOMES WHERE SLUM LANDLORDS HAD PACKED IN LOW-INCOME MINORITY FAMILIES AND REFUSED TO MAKE ESSENTIAL REPAIRS.

OPT

ONE MIGHT VISIT SAVANNAH WITHOUT SEEING OR HEARING OF THE VICTORIAN AREA, WHERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE STREET ARE ELEGANT, RESTORED MANSIONS, AND ON THE OTHER -- DILAPIDATED ROW HOUSES.

TAPE: CUT THREE-- GADESEN

"WHAT WAS HAPPENING WAS THAT MANY HOUSES WERE BEING REHABILITATED AND RECONDITIONED. PEOPLE WERE MOVING BACK INTO THE CITY FROM THE SUBURBS, BUT THEY WERE PEOPLE OF MEANS; PEOPLE OF RELATIVE WEALTH. AND, ALL OF THE MINORITY GROUPS THAT HAD ONCE OCCUPIED THIS AREA WERE MOVING OUT -- THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO STAY THERE."

NARR: JUDGE EUGENE GADESEN, A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF SAVANNAH LANDMARK, A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE TASK OF RESTORING AT LEAST HALF OF THE OLD AND CRUMBLING HOMES IN THE CITY'S VICTORIAN AREA FOR LOW-INCOME BLACK FAMILIES SO THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE FORCED OUT BY UPPER-CLASS PEOPLE RETURNING TO THE CITY.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- GADESEN

"THE PURPOSE OF SAVANNAH LANDMARK IS TO PROVIDE DECENT HOUSING FOR PEOPLE OF LIMITED INCOME IN THIS SAME VICTORIAN AREA. MISTER LEE ADLER WAS THE MOVING SPIRIT BEHIND THIS AND HE BECAME INTERESTED IN PROVIDING HOUSING FOR MINORITY GROUPS IN THE VICTORIAN AREA OF THE CITY."

TAPE: MUSIC -- BRIDGE: ESTABLISH, THEN FADE UNDER AND OUT BEHIND NARR:

NARR: AS JUDGE GADESEN MENTIONED, THE DRIVING FORCE IN SAVANNAH'S VICTORIAN AREA RENEWAL IS LEE ADLER, AN INVESTMENT BANKER, A DESCENDANT OF AN OLD SAVANNAH FAMILY AND A DEDICATED CIVIC LEADER. IN THE 1960'S, HE SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE HISTORIC SAVANNAH FOUNDATION, THE GORUP MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF 800 STRUCTURES. CURRENTLY, LEE ADLER HEADS THE 23-MEMBER BOARD OF THE SAVANNAH LANDMARK REHABILITATION PROJECT. THIS ORGANIZATION PLANS TO PURCHASE AND RESTORE AT LEAST 600 OF THE 1,200 SUBSTANDARD HOMES IN VICTORIAN AREA AND THEN RENT THEM BACK TO THE ORIGINAL TENANTS OR OTHER TENANTS ON WELFARE. AND, AS MISTER ADLER OUTLINES, THE RENTS WILL BE COMPARABLE TO THE RENTS PAID BEFORE THE HOMES WERE RESTORED.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- ADLER

"RENTS WILL BE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME. THAT'S BECAUSE OF SUBSIDIES OF INTEREST, AND RENT SUBSIDIES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALLOWS."

NARR: THERE IS NO QUESTION IN MISTER ADLER'S MIND THAT THE VICTORIAN AREA RENEWAL PLAN CAN NOT MEET WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN SUCCESS.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- ADLER

"WE DEVELOPED IT BECAUSE WE WERE DETERMINED - AND THAT'S THE KEY WORD - THAT WE COULD NOT, THROUGH THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT THAT'S SWEEPING TO THE SOUTH, DISPLACE A WHOLE POPULATION THAT HAS BEEN THERE FOR A LONG TIME."

NARR: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL, ALL WORKERS CONNECTED WITH THE RESTORATION OF THESE HOMES ... CARPENTERS, MASONS, PLUMBERS AND SO FORTH ... ARE PAID THROUGH FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYMENT TRAINING ACT; AN ACT BETTER KNOWN BY ITS ACRONYM, "CETA."

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- ADLER

"'CETA' IS A PROGRAM ORIGINATED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE CITIES TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED. IT APPLIES TO UNSKILLED, SEMI-SKILLED AND SKILLED WORKERS. ALSO, THEY LEARN A TRADE WHILE ON THIS PROGRAM OR THEY GET MORE PROFICIENT IN THE TRADE THAT THEY'RE ACCUSTOMED TO."

NARR: MANY AMERICAN CITIES THAT BUILT INDIVIDUAL OR APARTMENT HOUSING FOR THEIR LOW INCOME FAMILIES DEISOVERED THAT THROUGH TENANT NEGLECT THESE PROJECTS BECAME INSTANT SLUMS.

THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN IN SAVANNAH, LEE ADLER ASSURES US.

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- ADLER

"WE BUILT IN A MAINTENANCE FUND WITH THE RENT THAT THE PERSON PAYS PLUS THE RENT SUBSIDY WE GET FROM THE EDERAL GOVERNMENT SO THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN THEM. ALSO, THERE WILL BE VERY STRICT HOUSE RULES ABOUT THESE HOUSES."

NARR: BOBBY HILL, A CONGRESSMAN FOR THE STATE OF GEORGIA, IS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE BLACK RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH.

NARR: (CONT'D) MISTER HILL WAS ASKED IF THE SAVANNAH LANDMARK PROJECT, DESPITE ITS NOBLE INTENTIONS, WAS NOT ANTI-INTEGRATION. AFTERALL, THE PLAN CALLS FOR THE BLACKS MOVING BACK INTO THE SAME NEIGHBORHOODS THAT HAVE BEEN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS FOR YEARS.

TAPE: CUT NINE -- HILL

"THAT DOES NOT TROUBLE ME A GREAT DEAL. BLACK PEOPLE, LIKE WHITE PEOPLE, LIKE JEWISH PEOPLE, STILL GRAVITATE TO PEOPLE OF THEIR OWN HISTORY AND PERSUASION. I DON'T THINK YOU'LL CHANGE THAT. THATS' A FACT THAT WE MUST LIVE WITH. SO, I DON'T WANT TO FORCE ANYBODY TO GO INTO PLACES WHERE THEY DON'T WANT TO GO."

TAPE: CUT TEN -- MUSIC: BRIDGE: ESTABLISH, THEN FADE BEHIND AND OUT UNDER NARR:

NARR: RENOVATION, WHICH IS PUTTING AN NEW FACE ON SAVANNAH, BEGAN SOME TWENTY YEARS AGO WHEN AN OLD CITY MARKET WAS DEMOLISHED TO MAKE ROOM FOR A PARKING LOT. THIS INFURIATED MANY OF THE CITIZENS WHO FELT THEIR TOWN WAS WORTH SAVING. THEY FORMED THE HISTORIC SAVANNAH FOUNDATION WHICH NOT ONLY SPARKED THE RESTORING OF SOME 1,100 PLACES OF HISTORICAL NOTE, BUT ALSO THE DOWNTOWN SECTOR OF THE CITY, THE LOVELY 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURY MANSIONS, THE VENERABLE WATERFRONT, AND AS WE MENTIONED, MANY OF THE HOMES IN THE TRADITIONAL BLACK SECTOR OF THE VICTORIAN AREA.

MAYOR JOHN ROUSAKIS, (RUE-SOCK-US) A SON OF GREEK IMMIGRANTS, IS OF THE OPINION THAT THE PEOPLE OF SAVANNAH DESERVE THE MAJOR CREDIT FOR REBUILDING THEIR CITY.

TAPE: CUT ELEVEN -- ROUSAKIS

"YOU SEE, SAVANNAH IS MADE OF A VARIETY OF ETHNIC GROUPS. WE COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THERE ARE GERMAN COLONIES HERE, ITALIAN, GREEK, IRISH, RUSSIAN ... THERE'S A GREAT MIXTURE OF PEOPLE HERE AND A GREAT LOVE OF HERITAGE, A GREAT LOVE OF TRADITION. THERE WAS THIS VERY STRONG GROUP, THIS CORE GROUP OF HISTORIC SAVANNAH, THAT SAID WE CAN NOT LET OUR CITY COME CRUMBLING DOWN, TO DETERIORATE, TO BECOME PARKING LOTS, OR WHAT HAVE YOU, AND LOSE THE CHARM OF WHAT THIS CITY IS ALL ABOUT."

NARR: DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MOVING BACK FROM THE SUBURBS INTO THE CITY. IN ADDITION, SAVANNAH HAS ATTRACTED SE ERAL DIVERSE INDUSTRIES.

MAYOR ROUSAKIS CLAIMS THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZED THAT GROWTH INCREASE WOULD CREATE A MULTITUDE OF PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY POLLUTION, AND THEY HAD THE FORESIGHT TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE.

TAPE: CUT TWELVE -- ROUSAKIS

"WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST CITIES, LITERALLY IN THE NATION, THAT UNDERTOOK A MASSIVE POLLUTION ABATEMENT PROGRAM. IT'S IN FORCE NOW. WE'RE NOT POLLUTING THE RIVER. MAJOR INDUSTRIES ALONG THE RIVER HAVE PUT IN POLLUTION ABATEMENT EQUIPMENT. BEHIND CITY HALL TODAY YOU CAN SEE PORPOISES BACK, FISH JUMPING -- THE SEA BIRDS ARE BACK. THAT'S A SIGN THAT THE POLLUTION IN OUR INDUSTRIAL RIVER, THE SAVANNAH RIVER THAT WE WERE CRITICIZED SO STRONGLY FOR A FEW YEARS AGO BY RALPH NADER IN A BOOK CALLED, 'THE WATER LORDS,' IS NOW ALIVE AGAIN. IT'S NOT A RECREATIONAL STREAM, BUT IT'S CLEAN ENOUGH FOR THE FISH TO COME BACK."

NARR: HANS HENHAUSER, CONSERVATIONIST FOR THE STATE OF GEORGIA, AGREES THAT THE SAVANNAH RIVER IS LESS POLLUTED NOW THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE RECENT PAST. HOWEVER, .8534 ,37#-734 WARNS, THE CITY MUST NOW FIND THE MEANS TO REDUCE AND CONTROL INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION OF ANOTHER SORT.

OPT

TAPE: CUT THIRTEEN -- NEUHAUSER

OPT

"I THINK THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN SAVANNAH IS AIR POLLUTION -- AIR POLLUTION CREATED PRIMARILY BY INDUSTRY. WE DO NOT HAVE A GOOD PICTURE YET OF WHAT HAS TO BE DONE AND BY WHOM, AND WHETHER THIS NEEDS TO BE DONE THROUGH REGULATORY MECHANISMS THAT EXIST OR WHETHER NEW PROGRAMS HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED EITHER IN THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES."

TAPE: CUT FOURTEEN -- MUSIC: BRIDGE

NARR: SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, IS A SOUTHERN CITY, A CITY WITH A LARGE BLACK MINORITY. BUT, UNLIKE MANY SOUTHERN CITIES, SAVANNAH ACCEPTED INTEGRATION IN ITS STRIDE. TRUE, THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS, BUT LITTLE VIOLENCE. THIS WAS DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO THE FACT THAT BLACK AND WHITE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY SAT DOWN TOGETHER AND WORKED OUT THEIR PROBLEMS. TOM COFFEY, CHIEF OF THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE "SAVANNAH NEWS PRESS," REFLECTS HIS OWN AS WELL AS HIS NEWSPAPER'S LONG-TIME STAND ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND INTEGRATION.

TAPE: CUT FIFTEEN -- COFFEY

"I THINK THE WHOLE RACIAL PROBLEM STEMMED FROM TELLING BLACKS WHAT THEY COULDN'T DO. NOBODY LIKES TO BE TOLD IN A FREE COUNTRY WHAT HE CAN'T DO. PEOPLE USED TO ASK ME BACK DURING THE TIME WHEN WE WERE HAVING DEMONSTRATIONS AND MARCHES AND ALL THAT -- DIDN'T I THINK IT WAS TERRIBLE THAT ALL THIS WAS HAPPENING? I SAID, 'I THINK IT'S TERRIBLE. I THINK IT'S A BLIGHT ON OUR SOCIETY THAT IT IS HAPPENING.' THEN I SAID, 'IF I WERE BLACK, I WOULD DAMN SURE BE DEMONSTRATING AND I WOULD DAMN SURE BE SITTING IN AND BE DOING WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING RIGHT NOW BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GOING THROUGH.' I NEVER COULD FAULT THEM FOR WANTING TO INTEGRATE. BUT, AS FAR AS TOTAL INTEGRATION, I THINK BLACKS HAVE A FIRM RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE. BUT ... THEY WANT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THAT CHOICE THEMSELVES."

NARR: THE AMERICAN-BORN HOSTESS AND ENGLISH PARLIMENTARIAN, LADY ASTOR, ONCE DUBBED SAVANNAH "THE PRETTY LADY WITH THE DIRTY FACE." OH, IF ONLY SHE COULD SEE SAVANNAH TODAY WITH ITS FLOWERING MASS OF AZALEAS, MAGNOLIAS, ROSEBUDS AND DOGWOODS.

NARR: ITS STURDY OAKS THAT LINE SPOTLESS, WIDE BOULEVARDS. ITS
(CONT'D)
EASY GOING WAY OF LIFE...WHERE EVERYDAY LOOKS LIKE SUNDAY.

TAPE: CUT SIXTEEN -- MUSIC: "SUNDAY IN SAVANNAH." 0:15 SECOND INTRO: SNEAK UNDER. OVERALL TIME: 2:55
(SEGUE TO)

TAPE: CUT SEVENTEEN -- THEME: ESTABLISH, THEN FADE AND HOLD BEHIND ANNCR:

ANNCR: YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO "SAVANNAH, GEORGIA: A CITY REBORN," A PORTRAIT FOR RADIO OF ONE OF AMERICA'S CITIES. THIS PROGRAM WAS WRITTEN BY ARTHUR SMALL.

LISTEN AGAIN, (DATE) ----------AT (TIME) ----------
WHEN THE VOICE OF AMERICA WILL BRING YOU A PICTURE IN WORDS AND SOUNDS OF ANOTHER AMERICAN CITY.

YOUR GUIDE WAS ----------, AND THIS IS ----------

TAPE: MUSIC: UP FOR FILL AS NEEDED.

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